



Meeting Minutes

Open Meeting

Date: January 26, 2017
Location: Via conference call

IN ATTENDANCE:

Members

Anthony Abrantes (Northeast Regional Council of Carpenters), Marie Betlow (Job Search Central), Tammy Case (Fulton Bank of NJ), Ann Marie Flake (Saint Clare's Health System), David Hollowell (D&D Associates, **WDB Chair**), Carol Hults (Highlands State Bank), Carl Jablonski (NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development), Rosalie Lamonte (Sussex and Warren Schools), Terry Newhard (NORWESCAP), Frank Petruccelli (National Mortgage Staffing), Antoney Smith (NJ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services), Marty Telles (The High Tide Group LLC).

Guests

Eve Azar (Warren County Community College), Jill Butcher (Warren County Library), Stacy Crosson (Sussex County Technical School), Eva Fernandez (NJ Department of Labor & Workforce Development), Elizabeth Gloeggler (Literacy NJ), Mike Gowdy (Morris County School of Technology), George Graham (Sussex County Board of Chosen Freeholders), Pat Green (Project Self-Sufficiency), Joanne Hala (United Way of Northern NJ), Sean Hendricks (NJ Department of Labor & Workforce Development), Anthony Iacono (County College of Morris), Julie Knapp (Sussex County Library), John Lehnert (NJ Department of Labor & Workforce Development), Mackenzie Moran (Health Care Talent Network, Northern and Central NJ), Kyersten Rozanski (Project Self-Sufficiency), Edward Smith (Warren County Board of Chosen Freeholders), Robert Wanthouse (Morris County Economic Development Corporation).

Staff

Jane Armstrong (WDB Senior Planner), Jack Patten (**WDB Director**), Sallie Sullivan (Secretary to the WDB Director).

ABSENT:

Members

William Austin, Mark Bocchieri, Paul Boudreau, David Fiore, Robert Glowacky, George Krevet, Gus Modla, Scott Moffitt, Dianna Morrison, Steve Sitek, Sue Zukoski.

Prior to the January 26, 2017 Open Meeting, the following documents were posted on the WDB website (<https://mswwdb.org/board-committees/>) for review: Open Meeting minutes (October 27, 2016); Disability Committee minutes (November 2, 2016); draft Executive Committee minutes (January 17, 2017); Literacy Committee minutes (November 16, 2016); One-Stop Career Center Committee minutes (November 1, 2016); Youth Investment Council minutes (November 28, 2016);

and the WDB Director and One-Stop Operator Report.

The Oversight Committee electronically reviews budget, performance and monitoring reports monthly.

MEETING OPENING REMARKS

At 9:00 a.m., WDB Chair David Hollowell called the meeting to order and read the Public Meeting Notice. He thanked all for calling in and asked that they identify themselves.

WDB BOARD BUSINESS

WDB Director Jack Patten reported on the following:

Local Area Plan

Jack reported that the Local Area Plan was submitted to the NJ State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) on December 15, 2016, after a public comment period from November 14 to December 14, 2016. The signature page for the Plan required a resolution signed by the Freeholder Director of the Morris County Board of Chosen Freeholders to complete the legal packet. The executed signature page was submitted to the SETC on January 25, 2017, which completes the Plan submission.

The Local Area Plan lists services, activities, partners, coordination and target groups – all components of how the One-Stop Career Center system is run in all three counties. The Plan can be viewed on the WDB website at: <https://mswwdb.org/publications/>.

Annual Report

Jack said the design of the Annual Report is complete. It has been released by the designer, is ready for printing, and will be available in the near future. The Report covers the final year of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and contains performance and fiscal information. It also provides information on the most popular training courses, characteristics of people trained, and kinds of activities that people use the most. It will be posted on the website as soon as the final copy is received.

Title II Adult Education Plan

Jack said this year the SETC is mandating a larger role for WDBs in the Title II Plan. Title II education services in this area are provided by the Adult Education Consortium, which consists of Morris County School of Technology, Sussex County Community College, and Warren County Technical School. The SETC's requirement is not a big departure for the WDB which has been involved in the Plan in the past, including reviewing and signing off. He doesn't anticipate any difficulty in agreeing on the content of the Plan. The difference this year is that close communication will occur throughout the Plan preparation period to make sure that all parties are on the same page. Intensive meetings will begin as soon as the State releases the Title II planning instructions. This is essentially a formalizing of what is already a close relationship between the WDB, ETS and the Title II Consortium, which does a wonderful job.

OLD BUSINESS

Chair Hollowell opened the floor for any old business that was pending. There being no old business, he moved to the next item on the agenda.

NEW BUSINESS

Chair Hollowell then opened the floor for any new business.

Jack Patten recognized and welcomed Freeholders George Graham from Sussex County and Ed Smith from Warren County. He also extended a welcome to Dr. Anthony Iacono, the new President of County College of Morris. Jack mentioned that Dr. Iacono has an extensive background in workforce development and said that during a recent brief conversation, it was instantly obvious that he will be a great asset to the workforce development system in the tri-county area.

George Graham of the Sussex County Board of Chosen Freeholders thanked the Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the Workforce Development Board and Employment and Training Services for their presentation before the Sussex County Board of Chosen Freeholders last night (January 25, 2017). He said it was well presented and well received, and that those at the meeting said they were surprised at how much the WDB and ETS are doing and how much forethought they put into it. Jack thanked George for inviting them and said the conversations afterwards with the interested parties, both providers and users of services, were very valuable.

Kyersten Rozanski of Project Self-Sufficiency (PSS) reported that their 22 New Jersey Youth Corps students will graduate on February 9. She said PSS has been working very diligently with this group on soft skills and preparing them for the workplace.

MEETING TOPICS

Labor Market Discussion

Jack Patten told the group that the labor market discussion would address projections for the workforce in 2017. Along those lines, he found a number of articles predicting workforce trends -- local, state, and national. He said this was within the context of historically low unemployment in the three counties. For November, the last month for which data is available, unemployment was 3.2% in Morris, 3.7% in Sussex and 3.7% in Warren. These low levels of unemployment suggest a complete turnaround in the labor market from several years ago.

Jack shared the following trends, which he said reflected the fact that employees are now valuable, in demand, and are to be accommodated:

- **2017 will be the year of the middle manager.** Middle managers were the greatest casualties throughout the recession and most labor market watchers never expected them to come back. *(NJ Association of Counties (NJAC) "County Biz" publication)*
- **10 Highest paying and growing occupations.** Another publication listed managers in five of the top ten highest paying and growing occupations. Two of the other occupations were engineering and management.
- **Focus on employee experience to drive engagement.** Low unemployment has changed the practice of not responding when applicants send in their resumes. Companies now realize that part of their outreach is to stay in touch, even with applicants they don't want to hire immediately but who they might want to hire in the future. *(NJ Association of Counties (NJAC) "County Biz" publication)*

Macro Trends:

(Morris County Economic Development Corporation)

- **Automation, virtual reality and driverless vehicles.**
- **Preference for walkable living to reduce commuting time.** This was mentioned by Dr. James Hughes of Rutgers during his presentation to the WDB last April.

- **Fewer employment opportunities for high school grads.** One point made by the Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development last night (January 25) was that there is a great gain in earnings and occupational outlook by having just one additional year of training after high school. Jack spoke of the difficulty of getting self-sufficient paying wage jobs for high school graduates. The WDB is committed to getting at least that one additional year of training that positions people to succeed in the workforce.
- **Aging population and decline in birth rate.** Births in the US were three million less than predicted. The dwindling population will ultimately affect the labor market; the question is, how and when?

On the National Level:

(Forbes)

- **Companies focused on improving their candidate and employee experience.**
- **Blended workforce on the rise.** A blended workforce is a combination of full-time and freelance employees.
- **Millennials meet Generation Z in the workplace.** Generation Z (1996-2010) is said to be even more technologically adept than Millennials.
- **Virtual reality revolutionized training.** Jack said he's very eager to see demonstrations of this and asked that if anyone knows where it is available, or knows someone who's actually doing it, he'd appreciate the information.
- **War for talent.**
- **Wage pressure.** Jack said all the conditions for wage pressure are in place but it hasn't occurred yet. Many economists are predicting 3% inflation this year, which would almost guarantee that wages will increase.
- **Workplace wellness and wellbeing.** Jack said this trend, which is again related to accommodating and keeping employees, will become a critical benefit for attracting and retaining top talent.

Jack then turned the labor market discussion over to the group, starting with Marie Betlow:

Marie Betlow of **Job Search Central** reported on salary increases. She said the three areas that are struggling to hire top talent are: IT, labor positions and machine operators. She shared that a client in IT who returned to the labor market after being out for over two years is now earning more than he earned then.

Because the "talent wars" are now on, companies are looking at training and developing their internal staff, identifying external talent pools, and providing additional benefits and perks. Marie agreed with Jack that large companies, such as CIGNA, are putting in very aggressive wellness programs. These companies are also looking for people with experience. Companies such as American Express are surveying their applicants as they go through the recruiting process to gain valuable information so that they can provide a better recruiting experience.

Marie said that over 40% of companies state they are not filling positions as quickly as they would like due to a lack of applicants with hard skills. She indicated that sometimes the salaries are not in alignment, and soft skills, which are important to the employers, come into play. A combination of hard and soft skills make an employee a very valuable asset.

The top 10 jobs include: Registered Nurses, sales representatives, software developers, software application developers, and cybersecurity. Marie said she was shocked to learn that over 200,000 cybersecurity jobs went unfilled this past year. She indicated she has seen individuals who have gone through co-secondary training and gained a track to find a position within cybersecurity.

Marie said the trend right now is to look at people's experience and immediate training, as opposed to placing all emphasis on their degrees.

Jack asked Carol Hults if she's seen any of these trends become evident in banking yet.

Carol Hults of Highlands State Bank said she agrees with Marie. She is a big advocate for soft skills, which is a great need in banking. They still need people with good soft skills in the branches who communicate well, know the product, and know how to handle a customer's concerns.

Jack mentioned that Employment and Training Services has initiated a soft skills program for youth, and one coming soon for adults, in response to the obvious need for soft skills.

Tammy Case of Fulton Bank of NJ said that historically banks have always looked for people with accounting skills; however, there's been a real shift to bring people in with sales skills because it's now more about customer service and sales. The accounting people tend to be a little more introverted. She said that, with regard to the wellness and wellbeing that Jack mentioned before, at Fulton Bank they have recently been bringing out a lot of training on coaching skills and culture shaping from the top of the house down.

Jack said that again and again they're seeing the need for sales skills permeating many jobs now. It's often the third or fourth skill listed, along with communication skills. Since so many jobs are being structured to include sales, these skills are important and the need for them has to be addressed.

Robert Wanhouse of Morris County Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC) reported that they have projections for many of the occupations that they are seeing. The forecast that he mentioned looks at increases in jobs from 2016 to 2017. Some of the more notable occupations showing an increase (in the Morris County area) are: Home Health Aide, Medical Scientist and Bio Chemist. Jack Patten asked if Robert could send him a copy of the projections, to be shared with WDB members and guests.

Rosalie Lamonte of Sussex and Warren County Schools reported that they are beginning to see several issues for the next school year's budget and she doesn't anticipate a lot of hiring. They do, however, have a great need for math and science teachers and are seeing a large deficit in bilingual educators. Those particular areas should have growth. Business Administrators are still in short supply, as reported in the past.

George Graham of the Sussex County Board of Chosen Freeholders reported that he is going through their County budget process right now, and that difficulty finding people who want to work for the County is an issue. One restriction is the moderate rate pay, although they do offer very good benefits. A few years ago, they advertised for the position of Administrator and the pool of candidates that they received was not what they expected. They find they're receiving far fewer responses than they used to.

Chair Hollowell thanked all for their participation and asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Marie Betlow, then seconded and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:36 a.m.